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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

Forty-seventh session

REPORT OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE (11 December 1996)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The fifth meeting of the Standing Committee was opened by the Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee, His Excellency Mr. Björn Skogmo (Norway).

II. RENTAL OF UNHCR'S HEADQUARTERS' PREMISES AT MONTBRILLANT

2. The Chairman noted that there was a single substantive item on the agenda: the rental of UNHCR headquarters premises at Montbrillant. He recalled that the subject had already received the attention of the Standing Committee on a number of occasions, recalling that at the June 1996 meeting it had considered conference room paper EC/46/SC/CRP.40 (*Montbrillant Building:Rental Costs)* with its annexed decision. Additional information was provided in CRP/40/Add.1 at the October meeting which also reviewed pertinent comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) contained in document A/AC.96/865/Add.4, paragraphs 20-28.

3. The Chairman recalled that the October meeting of the Standing Committee had decided that a further consolidated paper should be prepared. The requested consolidated paper was before the Standing Committee in the form of EC/47/SC/CRP.1.

4. The Controller introduced the conference room paper under consideration, noting that in paragraph 9 reference is made to confirmation by the Swiss authorities that the cost related to amortization of the loan contracted by FIPOI would not exceed SFR 2,420,000. This responded to concerns expressed by both the ACABQ and the Standing Committee that SFR 2.40 million be considered a ceiling rental charge. The Controller also highlighted the issue of running costs, saying that while the overall running costs in 1995 were SFR 1,626,220, in 1996 they were confirmed to be SFR 1,486,000 and in 1997 they would further decrease to SFR 1,390,000.

5. The Standing Committee adopted the attached decision (see Annex) without debate.

6. After adoption of the decision, the delegation of Switzerland took the floor to express its satisfaction that agreement had been reached on the terms under which the Swiss authorities would conclude a lease with UNHCR covering the Montbrillant building. The agreement reached by the Standing Committee would, moreover, allow the authorities to focus on other urgent matters, including aspects of the security of the building and modifications to the external part of the entrance. The delegation also recalled that Switzerland would now proceed to raise the level of its annual contribution to UNHCR's General Programmes by 2 million Swiss francs as of 1996, subject to annual budgetary approval.

Decision on
Rental of UNHCR's Headquarters premises at Montbrillant

The Standing Committee,

Having considered the information contained in documents EC/46/SC/CRP.40, EC/46/SC/CRP.40/Add.1 and EC/47/SC/CRP.1 on the arrangements proposed for the rental of UNHCR's Headquarters building at Montbrillant, and taking due note of the comments of the ACABQ in document A/AC.96/865/Add.4,

a) Endorses the proposal of the High Commissioner to enter into a formal rental agreement with the Swiss authorities on the basis of the arrangements set out in EC/47/SC/CRP.1;

b) Decides that the agreement will be re-examined by the Standing Committee early in the final year of the initial five year lease with a view to considering its provisions in light of rental conditions for international organizations prevailing at that time, before renewal of the lease comes into effect.